
Introduced by Senator Correa

(Coauthors: Senators Beall, Calderon, Cannella, De León,

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Senate Joint Resolution No. 8—Relative to immigration.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 8, as introduced, Correa. Immigration.

This measure would specify principles for repairing the nation's broken immigration system, and would urge Congress and the President of the United States to take a comprehensive and workable approach to improving the nation's immigration system using those principles.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, This country was built by immigrants seeking a
2 better life; and

3 WHEREAS, Estimates suggest there are 11 million
4 undocumented immigrants living in the shadows in the United
5 States, including millions of children brought to this country
6 undocumented who have grown up here and call the United States
7 home; and

8 WHEREAS, A logical and streamlined path to citizenship for
9 these residents would stimulate the economy by allowing them to
10 get college degrees and driver's licenses, buy homes, start new
11 companies, and create legal, tax-paying jobs, affording them a
12 chance at the American Dream; and

1 WHEREAS, The United States Congress last enacted major
2 immigration legislation more than 25 years ago; and

3 WHEREAS, Since that time, fragmented attempts at immigration
4 reform have failed to create rational and effective systems needed
5 to maintain international competitiveness. Whether in an industry
6 like agriculture, which requires large numbers of workers able to
7 perform physically demanding tasks, or in technology or health
8 care, where the demand for employees with advanced degrees is
9 projected to exceed supply within the next five years, immigration
10 policy must be designed to respond to emerging labor needs in all
11 sectors of the United States economy; and

12 WHEREAS, Our national interests and security are not served
13 by our outdated, inefficient, and slow-moving immigration system.
14 Patchwork attempts to mend its deficiencies undermine our
15 potential for prosperity and leave us vulnerable and unable to meet
16 the needs of the modern world; and

17 WHEREAS, To help our country recover from the financial
18 crisis, labor mobility is crucial to our economic prosperity. Yet
19 our rigid, outdated immigration policies are making it difficult for
20 our companies and our nation to compete. Information released in
21 a study by the University of California, Los Angeles, stated that
22 legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants working and
23 living in the United States would create around \$1.5 trillion in
24 additional gross domestic product growth over the next 10 years
25 and increase wages for all workers. A study done by the University
26 of California, Davis, indicates that the last large wave of
27 immigrants, from 1990 to 2007, raised the income of the
28 native-born American worker by an average of \$5,000; and

29 WHEREAS, California has the largest share of immigrants in
30 the country, and together they make up almost half our population.
31 Approximately 11 percent of workers in California are
32 undocumented immigrants. They are a vital and productive part
33 of our state's economy and are active in a variety of industries,
34 including technology, biotech, hospitality, agriculture, construction,
35 services, transportation, and textiles. They also represent a large
36 share of our new small business owners and create economic
37 prosperity and needed jobs for everyone; and

38 WHEREAS, Keeping these families, business owners, and hard
39 workers in the shadows of society serves no one; and

1 WHEREAS, Our state, for economic, social, health, security,
2 and prosperity reasons, must support policies that allow
3 undocumented immigrants to become legal and enfranchised
4 participants in our society and economy; and

5 WHEREAS, Comprehensive immigration reform should include
6 a reasonable and timely path to citizenship for undocumented
7 immigrants living and working in the United States already. It
8 should include health and comprehensive background checks, and
9 require demonstrated proficiency in English and payment of all
10 current and back taxes, and should have the flexibility to respond
11 to emerging business trends; and

12 WHEREAS, The Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan
13 research group in Washington, D.C., estimated that in 2012 the
14 federal government spent \$18 billion on immigration enforcement
15 and that the number of United States Border Patrol agents has
16 doubled since 2004; and

17 WHEREAS, Increased enforcement has given the federal
18 government the ability to prioritize the deportation of lawbreakers
19 and dangerous individuals and to ensure our border's security.
20 Nevertheless, this enforcement should not be done in an inhumane
21 way; and

22 WHEREAS, Immigration enforcement should continue to focus
23 on criminals, not on hardworking immigrant families, and not at
24 the expense of efficient trade with two of our top three economic
25 partners; and

26 WHEREAS, The United States loses large numbers of necessary,
27 highly skilled workers due to the lengthy and complicated
28 processes currently in place to get or keep a legal residency option;
29 and

30 WHEREAS, Reform should also include an expedited process
31 for those residing abroad and applying for legal visas. Additionally,
32 reform should offer permanent residency opportunities to
33 international students in American universities who are highly
34 trained and in high demand, and in so doing avoid an intellectual
35 vacuum after their graduation; and

36 WHEREAS, This reform should also include a way to help
37 families remain together throughout the lengthy bureaucratic
38 process. The system should take into account special circumstances
39 surrounding candidates for probationary legal status, such as those
40 of minors brought to the country as children or workers whose

1 labor is essential to maintain our country's competitiveness; now,
 2 therefore, be it
 3 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
 4 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature urges the President and
 5 the Congress of the United States to take a comprehensive and
 6 workable approach to solving our nation's broken immigration
 7 system, using the principles described in this resolution; and be it
 8 further
 9 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
 10 this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United
 11 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
 12 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
 13 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
 14 States.

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